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The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy

Strengthening the capability of the United Nations system to assist Member States in implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy

Programme budget implications of draft resoiution A/71/L.66

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the statement submitted by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/71/22) on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/71/L.66 on strengthening the capability of the United Nations system to assist Member States in implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. During its consideration of the statement, the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 21 May 2017.

2. In response to paragraph 70 of General Assembly resolution 70/291 on the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Review,[1] the Secretary-General has submitted report A/71/858, in which he indicates that a review was conducted in consultation with the Assembly and that the proposal contained in the report represents the first major institutional reform of the United Nations since he became Secretary-General (see paras. 2 and 78). The recommendations of the Secretary-General are contained in paragraph 69 of the report. In draft resolution A/71/L.66, the General Assembly welcomes the recommendations contained in the report of the

[1] The General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to review, in consultation with the Assembly, the capability of the United Nations system to assist Member States, upon their request, in implementing the Strategy in a balanced manner, including by strengthening cooperation with other international and regional organizations and improving the mobilization of resources necessary for capacity-building projects, with a view to providing concrete suggestions to the Assembly in this regard, by May 2017, for consideration by the Assembly during its seventy-first session

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Secretary-General and decides to establish the Office of Counter-Terrorism, in accordance with the competencies and functions set out in the report.

3. It is indicated in the statement on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/71/L.66 that, pursuant to paragraphs 1 to 4 of the draft resolution, the Secretary-General would establish a new Office of Counter-Terrorism as a separate component under section 3, Political affairs, of the programme budget, to be headed by an Under-Secretary-General reporting directly to the Secretary-General (A/C.5/71/22, para. 7).

4. Furthermore, it is indicated in the statement that, subject to the adoption of the draft resolution, modifications required in the biennial programme plan and priorities for the periods 2016-2017 and 2018-2019 will be presented to the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its fifty-seventh session, in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 58/269 (ibid., paras. 4-6). The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the proposed establishment of the Office would imply a change in the organization of resources under programme 2, Political affairs, of the biennial programme plan for the periods 2016-2017 and 2018-2019, but would not involve any changes to its objectives, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement. Furthermore, the cycle of the intergovernmental budgetary review process is such that, at certain times during the cycle, the Assembly adopts resolutions with an impact on the biennial programme plans, and the Committee for Programme and Coordination is provided with such changes during its subsequent session.

Additional resource requirements for 2016-2017

5. Following the adoption of the draft resolution by the General Assembly, the Secretary-General would, inter alia (see A/C.5/71/22, para. 8):

(a) Appoint an Under-Secretary-General to serve as head of the Office of Counter-Terrorism, Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force and Executive Director of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre and to provide strategic leadership to United Nations counter-terrorism efforts. The Under-Secretary-General will be supported by a Special Assistant at the P-3 level;

(b) Transfer from the Department of Political Affairs to the Office of Counter-Terrorism the current Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force Office and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, together with their existing staff, as well as all associated regular and extrabudgetary resources.

6. The Advisory Committee notes that, according to the statement of the Secretary-General, additional requirements amounting to $373,200, net, of staff assessment, would arise for the biennium 2016-2017 under sections 3, Political affairs, and 29D, Office of Central Support Services, which would cover the costs of the following:

(a) The establishment of two posts for one Under-Secretary-General and one P-3 ($127,200). The Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the resource requirements for the proposed two new posts for 2016-2017 were for a six-month period, from July to December 2017, and reflected a 50 per cent vacancy rate;

(b) Other operational expenses ($246,000), the details of which are set out in the table below paragraph 9 of the statement of the Secretary-General. The Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the cost estimates for alteration and furniture reflected the standard costs budgeted under section 29D.

7. The Secretary-General indicates that the additional requirements would be absorbed within the programme budget approved for the biennium 2016-2017. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the additional resource requirements would be absorbed within section 3, Political affairs, and section 29D, Office of Central Support Services, respectively, of the programme budget and that the establishment of the proposed two new posts would require the approval of the General Assembly.

8. Concerning the transfer of staff and of financial resources from the Department of Political Affairs, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that subject to the adoption of the draft resolution by the General Assembly, the transfer to the new Office would include:

(a) The projected balance of $590,500 as at 30 June 2017 against the revised appropriation of $2,044,500 under the programme budget for the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force Office for 2016-2017 (actual expenditures amounting to $1,229,400 as at 15 May 2017, with a projected expenditure of $224,600 until 30 June 2017);

(b) The cash balance of $93,547,000 in the Trust Fund for Counter-Terrorism;

(c) The six posts established under the programme budget (1 D-2, 1 P-5, 1 P-4, 1 P-3, 2 General Service (Other level)) and the currently existing 32 posts and positions funded from the Trust Fund. However, three posts located within the Executive Office of the Department of Political Affairs and funded from the Trust Fund to provide administrative support to the management of the Trust Fund would remain in the Executive Office of the Department.

9. Upon enquiry as to why the three posts funded from the Trust Fund would remain in the Executive Office of the Department of Political Affairs, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Executive Office of the Department provides administrative support services to the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force Office in the areas of finance, human resources, space planning and management, and audit advice. The three positions (2 P-3 Finance and Budget Officers and 1 General Service (Principal level) Finance and Budget Assistant) focus on the financial management of the Trust Fund, including certification of activities, administrative support to project activities, cost plan formulation and reporting of extrabudgetary resources. They also provide administrative support, travel support and low-value-procurement services. In an effort to use resources in the most cost-efficient manner, the intention of the Secretariat is that the Executive Office of the Department will continue to provide administrative support to the new Office of Counter-Terrorism, with the three positions complementing the work of existing personnel of the Executive Office. This arrangement is similar to the Executive Office of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support supporting the work of the Peacebuilding Support Office. **The Advisory Committee notes that not to transfer the three posts funded under the Trust Fund for Counter-Terrorism to the proposed Office of Counter-Terrorism may not be fully compliant with operative paragraph 2 of draft resolution A/71/L.66, and trusts that clarification will be provided to the Assembly at the time of its consideration of the present report.**

Resource requirements for 2018-2019

10. Concerning the requirements for the biennium 2018-2019 that would arise following the adoption of draft resolution A/71/L.66 by the General Assembly, the Secretary-General states that, owing to the timing of the draft resolution, the

requirements for 2018-2019 cannot be included in the proposed programme budget for the biennium. Subject to the adoption of the draft resolution, these requirements would be presented in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019 in line with existing budgetary procedures (see A/C.5/71/22, para. 11). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the resource requirements for 2018-2019 for the Office of Counter-Terrorism would be presented to the legislative bodies for their consideration during their review of the proposed programme budget for 2018-2019. **The Advisory Committee will review the resource requirements for 2018-2019 arising from the adoption of draft resolution A/71/L.66 following the submission of such requirements by the Secretary-General for the Office of Counter-Terrorism for the biennium 2018-2019.**

Recommendations

11. **Taking into account its comments and observations above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly approve the establishment of two posts (1 Under-Secretary-General and 1 P-3), under section 3, Political affairs, of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017.**

12. **The Advisory Committee further recommends that the Fifth Committee inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/71/L.66, additional resource requirements in the amount of $373,200 net of staff assessment, comprising $162,700 under section 3, Political affairs, and $210,500 under section 29D, Office of Central Support Services, would arise under the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017, which, the Secretary-General indicates, would be absorbed within sections 3 and 29D, respectively, of the programme budget approved for the biennium 2016-2017 (see para. 7 above).**